

FEEDING ON A WHOLE CHRIST

NO. 2407

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*"The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it,
and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.
They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it:
according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it."
Numbers 9:11-12*

IN great tenderness God permitted the Passover to be kept a second time, that those who had unavoidably been defiled at the first observance might not be shut out from the memorable and symbolical rite. But although He altered the date of the Passover, He never changed the form of it—the Paschal feast was to be the same whenever it was celebrated and by whomsoever it was observed.

Whether one family, or an Israelite who happened to be a stranger and visitor in the house, whoever it might be—kept the Passover—the same regulations were to be carefully followed. From this I gather, learning a lesson from the type, that, whatever may be the experiences through which we come to salvation, Christ is ever the same and we must partake of Him in the same way.

You who have been so defiled that you have, as it were, to eat of the second Passover, even at the eleventh hour, long after others have been feeding on Christ—still there is the same Christ for you as there is for those who come at the right time—who seek the Lord early, and find Him while yet the dew of their youth is upon them.

There is none but Jesus for each one of us. There is no way for this man peculiar to himself because of his righteous life, and no way for that person peculiar to himself because of his ungodliness—but for the most moral and the most immoral there is the same Savior to be received by like precious faith. Only by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus are we delivered from wrath and only by feeding upon Christ can our spiritual life be sustained.

There are not two gospels, but only one Gospel. There are not two Christ's, but only one Christ. There are not two roads to heaven, but only one road to heaven. Let us go together to the cross, view the one great Sacrifice for sin, and by faith find salvation in Him.

The subject for us to consider at this time will be just this—if we do receive Christ, that reception is beautifully expressed and represented by feeding upon Him. So, first, *we are to feed upon Jesus Christ*. The Paschal lamb was to be eaten. Secondly, *we are to receive Christ and feed upon Him as a whole Christ*, "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it." Then, thirdly, *we are to receive Christ in union with others*. It is a very blessed thing when our personal reception of Christ, our personal feeding upon Christ, is not a solitary act, but is done in company, as when, of old, a whole household drew near to feed upon the Paschal lamb.

I. First, then, WE ARE TO FEED UPON JESUS CHRIST.

The true reception of Christ is very beautifully expressed by our feeding upon Him. The point a sinner longs to know, when he is really aroused, and his conscience is thoroughly awakened, is first this—"How can I be saved? I know that Christ is a Savior, but how can I make Him my Savior? I understand that He has provided an atonement by which sin can be put away—how can that atonement put my sin away?"

When the Paschal lamb was killed in the household of the Israelite, first the blood must be sprinkled on the lintel and two side posts by the man who was the head of the household. And as soon as it was sprinkled, its virtue operated at once—that house was secure.

Next, they must bring in this lamb which had been roasted with fire, they must gather around the table, and all they had to do with it was to eat it. Now, eating is such a simple operation that I cannot explain it. I suppose that the best way of explaining how to eat would be by eating—and the best way of explaining how Christ is to be received is to receive Him.

Yet, since I am seeking to help some poor troubled one, I must try if I can to explain what it was to eat the Paschal lamb and what it is to receive Christ. I say again, eating the Paschal lamb was a very simple process. Moses might have said to a Jew, “That lamb, roast with fire, is yours if you will eat it. There is no ceremony to be gone through, no incantation to be repeated, no genuflection to be performed. You stand at the table, you eat the lamb, and it is yours.”

Now, concerning feeding upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the first thing to be done is *to receive Him by faith*. Receiving is the first part of eating. You are hungry, bread is set before you, you put the bread into your mouth, you receive it, and it becomes yours. So receive the Lord Jesus Christ—faith is the mouth by which He is to be received. Believe Him—believe what is testified concerning Him in the Word of God.

Say to yourself “This record is true, Jesus is the Son of God. He came into the world as man, He lived a holy life, He died a sacrificial death—‘the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.’ I believe all this. I accept it as true, as true to me, and I take it, not into my ear only as hearing it, but into my heart as believing it to be assuredly the truth whereby alone souls can be saved.”

“But suppose I take Him and have no right to Him.” Ah, if you once take Him, you have Him, right or no right! Have I not often told you that if you have eaten a piece of bread, though you had no right to it, it will puzzle all the lawyers in the world to get it away from you? Possession, in such a case as that, is more than the proverbial nine points of the law. Yes, it is all the points of the law, and if you take Christ as yours, then you have Christ as yours.

Oh, that you would grasp Him now! “Well, but suppose it is not right for me to have Christ?” It never was wrong for a poor sinner to take Christ, so do you have Him now. If He is near you, seize Him now. “Lay hold on eternal life,” says the apostle, and do you lay hold on Christ, and God will never cry, “Hands off!” to a soul that lays hold on Christ.

Be boldly daring for once and you shall not find yourself repulsed. The door of mercy is open, enter you—and if you are repulsed—you will be the first that ever was rejected by Christ, whoever you may be. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

“I have done that,” says one. I am very glad if you have, but have you really done it? There is a way of believing and yet not truly believing. A man believes that such and such a thing is true—at least, he says that he does—and yet he may act in such a way as shall prove that he does not believe it.

You are in your house, in bed and asleep. Someone wakes you up by crying out that your house is on fire, and you calmly turn over, and go to sleep again. I know by your action that you could not have believed the report that was brought to you.

One looks you in the face and tells you that he can see there traces of a deadly disease, and that, within a short time, you will be dead unless you take a certain medicine. Do you tell me you believe that disease to be upon you and believe that medicine would heal you if you took it—and after telling me that—do you go home and think no more of it? Then I know that you have not spoken truly in saying that you believe, for true believing would move you to action—you would be seriously affected by these things if you believed them to be true.

Come, then, let me ask you a question. Is sin a reality to you? Do you accept the sinner’s position and confess that you need a Savior? Do you believe that the Son of God has appeared in human form on purpose that He might save such as you are? Can you advance one step further and say, “I believe in Christ as *my* Savior”? So far so good—the bread is in your mouth.

In eating, the next thing is that the food should undergo a process of digestion. It must lie in the body and be dissolved. So, in order to a full reception of Christ, there must be somewhat of *digestion by meditation*. The great truths I have mentioned enter the soul—they are turned over in the heart and mind by meditation. We think of them, ponder them, consider them—they begin to influence us and our mind sets to work upon those truths, pressing the very juice and essence out of them—making us to know their secret virtues and powers.

O sirs, there are some of you who will never be saved by Christ, because you will not think! Unless the Lord Jesus should graciously meet with you, and on a sudden you should be caused to believe on Him—which I pray may be the case—I am afraid that you will certainly be lost. Some of you are not in a condition to get any good out of hearing the Gospel, because you do not think of what you hear, you do not lay up in your hearts and turn over in your minds what is taught you on the Sabbath-day.

Many let the Gospel have a clear thoroughfare, for they allow it to go in at one ear and out at the other. So Sunday after Sunday, week after week, month after month, year after year, with them it is only hearing the Gospel and that is all. The truth has no opportunity to become food to their spirits, for what they seem to take in one minute, they cast out the next—and this is not feeding at all—it is but folly and mockery.

Well now, after food has entered the body and has been digested, there is a further process. I am not going into any physiological discussions, but there is, as you know, the process that is called assimilation. Certain vessels within the body perform their various functions and so gradually the food which has been taken is made to nourish the body and build it up.

Thus the bread, which, a little while ago, was separate from me, becomes inseparable from me—it has been taken up into my system and has become part and parcel of myself. This is the best form of feeding upon Christ when, having believed the truth about Him, and having thought it over till we have digested it, certain secret faculties within our nature take Him up and *assimilate Him into our spiritual life*.

Look ye, sirs, I believe that Christ was the incarnate Son of God. I do not merely believe that as a mere matter of fact, as I might believe that there is such a person as the Czar of Russia, but I look to be saved by Him who became man in order that He might save me. See further. I believe that this God incarnate did bear my sins in His own body on the tree. I look to be forgiven—nay, I know that I am forgiven—because He took my sin away and ended it so far as I am concerned. That is assimilating the great truth of God of the atonement in the inmost part of my spirit. I do not want to explain the process any longer—I want you to put it into practice.

Now, beloved, you who have often fed upon Christ, feed on Him again at this moment. Think of Him as you know Him and try to know more of Him. But what you do know of Him, grasp it. Press out of these clusters their sacred juice. Draw out of these truths the divine support which they are intended to give to your spirit. Say, “These truths are mine. I live on them, I could die on them, I want nothing better.”

If you really thus feed upon Christ, it will come to this—that Christ and you will be one—and none shall be able to separate you from Him or to take Him from you. As the bread or the meat that you may eat becomes one with yourself, so will Christ, absorbed into your inmost heart by a childlike trust, become vitally and everlastingly part and parcel of your own self. And because He lives, you must live also, for He has made you to live and He lives in you.

I am sure that if you have once learned to feed upon Christ in the way I have been describing, you will not object to the “bitter herbs” that were to be eaten with the Passover. Oh, no! Those bitter herbs seem to give a zest to the feast. I thought to myself, when I was trying to get into the soul of this text, “I have my dish of bitter herbs every day.”

They come to me in this form—Christian ministers, whom I have educated, forsaking the faith. Christian people, who I thought were converted, behaving in an unseemly and ungodly manner. And

anxieties about many who do not seem to have so much care about their own souls as I have concerning them.

O Christ, my blessed Master, Your service is very sweet because of You, but in itself, woe is me that ever I was born to it! But the regulation is, “With bitter herbs shall ye eat it,” therefore, let us go on with our work and take whatever of bitterness accompanies our service.

Perhaps some of you get sneered at for your religion—that is your dish of bitter herbs. Or it may be that you are very poor, or possibly, the more you know of Christ, the more you know also of your own unworthiness, and that knowledge is like eating bitter herbs. Very well, thank God that you have Christ, and say nothing about the bitter herbs—for if the Israelite who is hungry gets a Paschal lamb to feed upon, he may well be content to take the bitter herbs with it.

The Israelites were also to eat the Passover “with unleavened bread.” Leavened bread is usually considered by our poor fallen nature to be more agreeable to our taste, and there is a measure of self-denial implied in the putting away of the leaven. Well, we are called to deny ourselves for Christ’s sake and we would put away all forms of sin—everything that is leavened—that we may have our all in Him and find everything that delights the palate and charms the spirit in Christ alone.

Yes, take away your leavened bread with all its sweetness, and bring in the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread instead—we will be perfectly satisfied so long as the true Paschal Lamb is upon the table and our souls may feed upon Him.

I will say no more on this first part of my subject, but I pray you in the silence of your spirits to feed upon Christ Jesus.

II. This brings me to my second point, which is that WE ARE TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS A WHOLE.

The Lord said, concerning the Passover, “They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it.” If we receive Christ, we must receive Him as a whole.

We must receive Christ *in the entirety of His person*. There was Arias—he would receive Christ as a good man, but not as God. But you cannot have Christ at all unless you have Him as a whole. There were some who took the opposite side and were willing to receive Christ as God, but not as a bleeding, suffering man. But you cannot receive Christ at all if you will not have Him altogether—you must have Him in the entirety of His person—as God and man, or else you cannot have Him at all, and cannot enjoy Him as the food of your soul.

We must also receive Christ *in the entirety of His offices*. He has come to be a Prophet, Priest, and King. Be willing to be instructed by Him, to be cleansed by Him, to be ruled by Him—and mark you, you cannot have the Priest unless you will also have the Prophet, nor can He be your Prophet unless He also becomes your King. A whole Christ in undivided honor, accepted as being all that He professes to be—you must have Him so or not at all.

And you must have *a whole Christ as to His work*. He comes to put away your sin by the shedding of His blood, and you say, “I will have Him.” But listen. He comes to take away your sinfulness, and make you holy by the water which flowed with the blood from His riven side. You cannot take justification and omit sanctification—you must have both or neither. The law concerning the Passover was, “They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it.” You must have Christ as He is set forth in His Word in all parts of His saving work.

And we must have Christ *in all His teachings*. It will not do for us to say, “I shall believe Christ when He speaks in His Sermon on the Mount and teaches us the ethics of ordinary life. But I will not believe Him when He opens up the mysteries of His love as He addresses His disciples on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane.”

You cannot have Him at all unless you are willing to believe all that He taught as far as you know it, and to believe that what He spoke must be true, even though as yet you do not know it. You must take the Lord Jesus Christ to be absolutely infallible to you, otherwise you cannot receive Him at all.

You must also take Christ *in all His warnings*. You must not turn your back when He says, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” and think His language too severe. They who cavil at one word of Christ have really caviled at Christ Himself. As one leak will sink a boat, so will one cavil at Christ destroy your loyal confidence in Him. Nay, take every word He says and believe it. Hang your soul upon it, knowing that it must be true since the Christ has said it. You must leave nothing of this blessed Paschal Lamb—you must break no bone of Him.

So must it be as to Christ *in all His commands*. It is ours not to reason why, but ours to do what He bids us. And we must not say, “This is essential and that is non-essential.” We must not say, “I will do this which He bids me, but I will not do that which He bids me.” You are not disciples, but rebels, if you act so. You are not His friends, but His enemies, if you thus pick and choose which of His commands you will obey.

How can he be a good soldier who will sometimes obey his captain, but will sometimes disobey? Such discipline as that, or rather, such want of discipline could be tolerated in no host, and it will not be endured in the armies of the living God. No, you must take a whole Christ in all His commands.

And it must be just the same as to *Christ and His spirit*. One says, “Christ is very loving and I will be loving, too.” You are right in saying so, my brother, but the Christ was very outspoken and very uncompromising—will you also be outspoken and uncompromising? If not, your loving spirit will go for little, for it will only be a kind of pandering to worldliness.

The spirit of Christ is a perfect spirit and he that has it not is none of His. It is not for us to select one quality of His spirit and say, “I will imitate that.” Nay, but as the Christ acted at all times, so do you act. As far as you are capable of following Him, put your foot down where He put His foot down, do what He did according to your measure and degree. A whole Christ fully and faithfully imitated can alone produce a perfect character.

Well now, beloved friends, you see what our orders are, here. We are, first, to feed upon Christ and then, next, we are to receive Him as a whole. But I regret that there are some persons who do not feed upon a whole Christ. Some, alas! will not do so through sheer willfulness. They will pick and choose, and thus show their self-conceit and their rebellion. Do not do so, do not do so, I beseech you, but feed on the whole Christ as the Israelites ate the whole of the Paschal lamb.

Some are unable through ignorance to feed on a whole Christ. They do not know Him or they would gladly receive Him. Let not ignorance hinder any of you from partaking of the sweetest things on the table of God’s grace—but say to yourself, “Little as I know, I feel that, if I knew more, I would only wish to know what Jesus would teach me. And I yield myself up to Him implicitly even as a blind man yields himself up to his guide, and I say to Jesus, “What I know not, teach Thou me.” In that way, you will at least be willing to eat the whole Paschal Lamb, even though through ignorance you do not fully understand what it is to receive Him.

There are some who, through timidity, fail to feed upon a whole Christ. They are afraid to take in some of the glorious doctrines which He teaches, some of the sweet things of His everlasting covenant, some of the strong meat of His eternal purposes, some of the fat things full of marrow, and the wine upon the lees, well refined. I pray you, shrink not back, but since Christ gives Himself wholly to all His people, if there is a precious covenant word, feed upon it. If there is a rich promise, believe it and enjoy it.

Christ denies nothing to His beloved. If you really come to His table and desire to have all that there is in Him, then take it, and be not afraid. He will never chide you. Therefore, make free with Christ, beloved. He Himself has given the invitation—“Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” Take all of Christ into your soul according to your capacity, till you are filled with Him—come joyfully and partake cheerfully of all that He freely gives to you, and be not afraid.

I think that I need not say more than that upon this second point. Only I would to God that many here were willing to say, “I will have a whole Christ.” If you are willing to have Him, He is yours. If you

will but trust Him, He is yours. There is nothing for you to do but to take Him as your hope to take your supper tonight. Receive Him into yourself to be the food of your spirit and He is yours forever.

III. I must say only just a few sentences on the last point. WE ARE TO RECEIVE CHRIST IN UNION WITH OTHERS.

The Passover was not a solitary meal. A man did not shut himself up alone and have the lamb roasted and set on the table, and try to eat it all himself. No, it was a family meal—all who were in the house, of the seed of Israel, master and servants, husband and wife and children—all came to that table and fed together.

Oh, I like to enjoy Christ for myself, but if I may not speak for others, I will speak for myself, and I must say that I always enjoy the things of God better with you than I do alone. There is so much zest about having friends to enjoy Christ with us. We can feast upon Him alone, blessed be His name—we do know the sweetness of solitary fellowship with Christ, but we love still more to share the blessing with other Christians.

I have no wish to go all the way to the Celestial City alone. I would much rather go with Christiana and Mercy, and all those little ones—the whole family of pilgrims—and Mr. Greatheart and all the rest of them. They had such cheery talks together and when they met the giants, if one was a little cast down, another brightened him up and encouraged him to play the man.

What a fine thing it was for such a poor creature as Mr. Ready-to-halt, who always went on his crutches, and for poor Little-faith, and Mr. Despondency, and Miss Much-afraid, to get into such good company! It would have been a dreary journey to them if they had gone all the way to the Celestial City each one alone.

But when they traveled in such good society, you know, they grew merry. You remember that they were so jubilant when Giant Despair's head was cut off that Mr. Ready-to-halt, though he had never done such a thing before, danced without his crutches. It is wonderful what joy comes out of Christian communion and holy fellowship. So it is good that you eat the Passover together, and not alone. It is well that you rejoice in Christ in the company of others who are rejoicing in Him.

The first with whom we should receive Christ is *our own family*. Well, then, my brother, what about the members of your family? Are they all converted yet? Are they all saved? If not, breathe a prayer that the Lord would bring the rest of them to the Paschal feast. Some of you will have to go away directly when we remain for the communion. Some of you husbands must leave your wives here, and you will have to go home, or go sit up in the gallery among the spectators. Recollect that there will be no spectators in heaven. And in that last dividing day, it will be an awful thing to be separated eternally from those we love. Happiest will it be in heaven itself if we shall all meet there an unbroken family.

Still, when the Jew met with his family and ate the Paschal supper, that was not the greatest joy of it, for he recollected that everywhere else, wherever there was an Israelite family, they were all doing the same, and that *the whole of the chosen people of God* were one in keeping this commemorative feast. So are all the people of God one in Christ Jesus.

I like to think that I have fellowship with all the saints. I do not object to have fellowship with those who differ from me in many respects. I do think that there is a communion of saints that cannot be limited. If there is life in you, and there is life in me, you may be mistaken and I may be mistaken upon some points, but the one life in us will make us have communion with Jesus.

Perhaps you do not obey all Christ's commands and I say to you, "Well, then, I will not commune with you." But I cannot help having communion with you if you are in the body of Christ. Communion is the pulse of the body, and unless I cut my finger off I cannot help having fellowship with my finger. It may be very dirty. I may tie a bit of red tape round it and say, "There, I will cut you off from fellowship with the rest of my body," but it is no use. As long as the body lives, and the finger lives, the fellowship must be there—the life-blood must continue to flow through it.

So, dear brethren, we see many saints of God, many whom we believe to be the children of God, who no doubt are mistaken and have many faults—and who is there who is not mistaken and is without

fault?—but if the life of God is in them, there is a fellowship beyond all rules and regulations, that is the fellowship of the life which is in the Head of the church. It pulses through all the members and must do so evermore.

I hope to come to the communion table tonight, then, enjoying fellowship with all the redeemed of the Lord both on earth and in heaven. Yea, and with those that have gone from earth hundreds of years ago, and by faith, also to enjoy something of fellowship even with generations yet unborn that in the fullness of time shall come to know the Lord.

Thank God, many of us do know what it is to commune with Christ as well as to commune with His people! Both as individuals and as a worshipping assembly, we have often proved the sweetness of fellowship with our Lord.

Sometimes, at that communion table, He has been set forth manifestly crucified among us. Sometimes, on our bed at night, He has spoken with us. I have known what it is to sit up and try not to go to sleep lest I should lose the overflowing joy of His divine presence. I have been afraid, sometimes, to rise from my bed in the morning lest, in going downstairs, I should break the spell of conscious fellowship with Him. Our Lord Jesus is so near His people, and there are times when we have such rapt communion with Him, that we can truly say that it is eternal life. Then do we sing—

*“I stand upon the mount of God,
With sunlight in my soul;
I hear the storms in vales beneath;
I hear the thunders roll:*

*“But I am calm with Thee, my God,
Beneath these glorious skies;
And to the heights on which I stand,
Nor storms nor clouds can rise.*

*“Oh, this is life! Oh, this is joy,
My God, to find Thee so;
Thy face to see, Thy voice to hear,
And all Thy love to know.”*

God grant us more of that blessed fellowship, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

NUMBERS 9

Verses 1-2. *And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season.*

I should almost fear that they had omitted the keeping of the passover for a year. There was a first celebration of it when they came out of Egypt, but then it was not so much a type as a matter of fact. It was the thing itself, not the remembrance of the coming out of Egypt, but the actual coming out, the exodus.

One would gather from this command of the Lord that, on the first anniversary of that memorable season, the children of Israel had omitted its observance, and hence JEHOVAH said to Moses, “Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season.” If this conjecture is correct, it is very significant that a rite which belonged to the law, and was therefore to pass away, was so soon neglected, and certainly it was afterwards neglected for many, many years.

Whereas, the great memorial ordinance of the Christian dispensation—the Lord’s supper—was not neglected even when Christians were under fierce persecution from the Jews or other nations. When the observance of that rite among the heathen was pretty sure to bring death, yet Christians met together on the first day of the week, and continually broke bread in remembrance of their Lord’s death, even as we do to this day. I suppose that the supper, which is the memorial of Christ our Passover, has never been altogether neglected throughout the world, but has been a matter of constant observation in the church of Christ, and shall be “till he come.”

3-7. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover. And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel. And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day: and those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season among the children of Israel?

They were in a great difficulty. They were commanded to come to the passover, they sinned if they did not come, but they had defiled themselves, either through accident or of necessity, and if they came thus to the passover they would be committing sin, so that either way they were in an ill case. There must be somebody to bury the dead. I suppose that these persons had fulfilled that necessary office, and there had not been time for them to purge themselves from the ceremonial defilement involved in the touching of the dead—so what were they to do?

8. And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you.

Oh, how wisely we should give advice if we would never decide till we had prayed about the matter! Possibly, we think ourselves so experienced, and so well-acquainted with the mind of God, that we can answer offhand, or peradventure, we think that we need not consult the Lord at all, but that our own opinion will be sufficient guide. Moses was greater and wiser than we are, yet he said to these men, “Stand still, and I will hear what JEHOVAH will command concerning you.”

9-12. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

So that, provision was made for the holding of a second passover, that persons who were defiled at the first observance might have the opportunity to keep the feast a month afterwards.

13. But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.

What a solemn sentence that is! Let me read it apart from its connection, “Because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.” You see, the great offering of the Lord, the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the only way by which sin can be put away. And if any man will not bring that, in other words, if he will not believe in Jesus, then here is his certain doom, “that man shall bear his sin.” No more terrible judgment can be pronounced upon any one of us than this, “that man shall bear his sin.” “If ye believe not that I am he,” said Christ, “ye shall die in your sins.”

14. And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

Now comes another subject—

15-16. *And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony; and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was alway: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.*

This was the sign of the presence of God in the midst of that vast canvas city. I suppose that the great cloud rose up from the most holy place, and probably covered the whole camp of the tribes, so that it shielded them from the fierceness of the sun, while at night the entire region was lit up by this marvelous illumination. The chosen nation had the pillar of cloud by day for a shelter, and the pillar of fire by night for a light. God's presence acts upon us in much the same way as the cloudy fiery pillar acted upon Israel.

*“He hath been my joy in woe,
Cheer'd my heart when it was low,
And with warnings softly sad,
Calm'd my heart when it was glad.”*

We get shelter from the fierce heat of the world's day and deliverance also from the darkness of the world's night through our Lord's gracious presence.

17-20. *And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.*

Happy people to be thus divinely guided! They could never tell when they would have to be on the move. They had no abiding city. When their tents were pitched, and they were just getting comfortably settled, perhaps that very morning the pillar of cloud moved, and at other times, when they desired to be marching, it stood still. They could never be certain of staying long in any one place.

It is just so with you and with me. Our Lord intends to keep us with a loose hold on all things here below. We cannot tell what changes may come to any one of us. Therefore, reckon on nothing that God has not plainly promised. Be certain of nothing but uncertainty, and always expect the unexpected. You cannot tell between here and heaven where your Guide may take you. Happy will you be if you can truly say that you desire ever to follow where the Lord leads.

21-23. *And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.*

So may each one of us ever be divinely guided!

*“Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.”*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—289, 819

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.